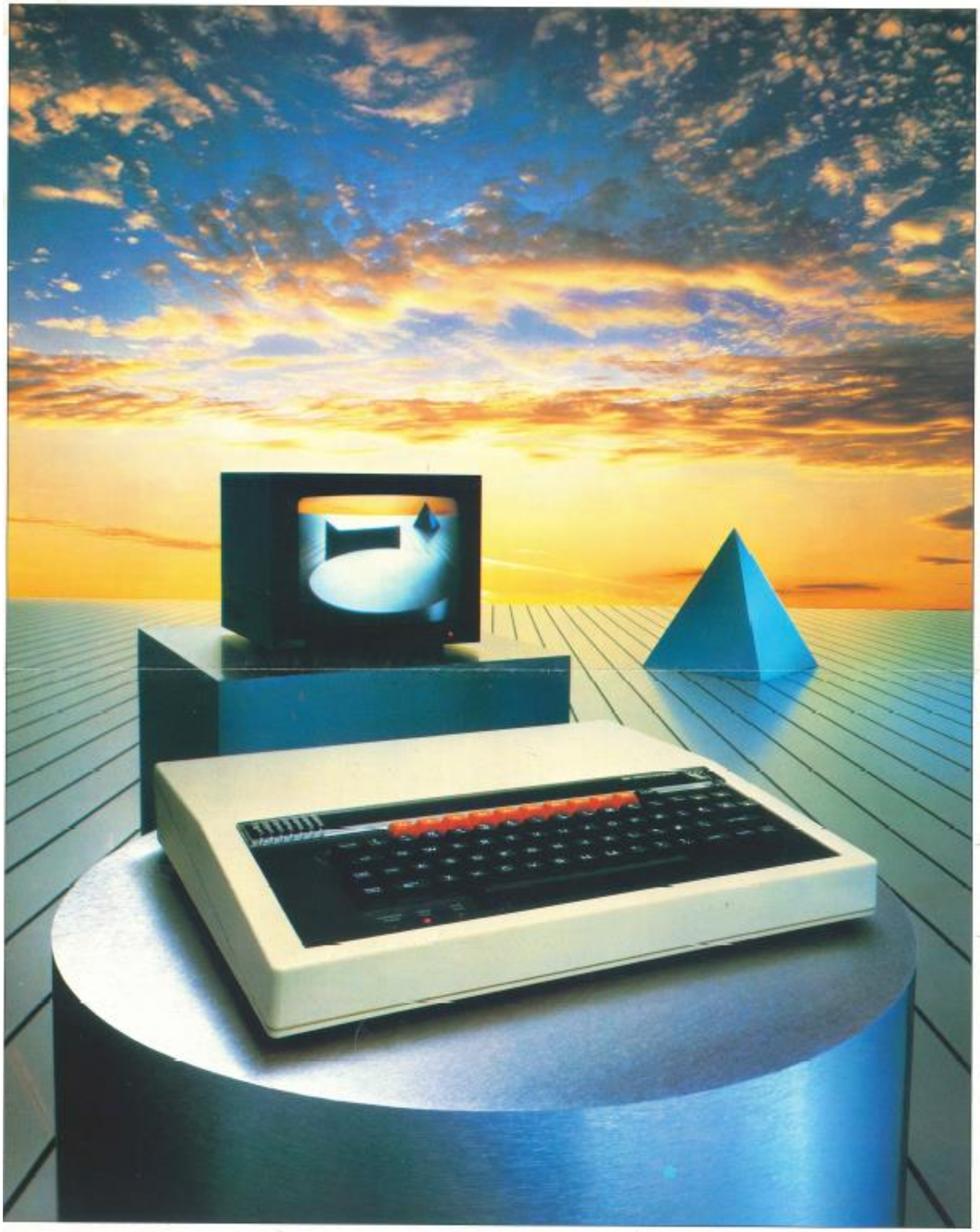


The shape of things to come

The BBC Microcomputer System

What the BBC Microcomputer gives you



Amongst the shifting sands of computer technology the BBC Microcomputer is here to stay. 'Everything possible seems to have been done to ensure that this is not a "dead-end" machine which you will have to throw away after a year or two when its basic technology is, inevitably, superseded', comments Paul Beverley in the July 1982 edition of *Personal Computer World*.

In the UK, the Department of Industry has recommended it for both primary and secondary schools.

It has been chosen as the personal computer for the BBC's own Computer Literacy Project, which includes two series of television programmes on the use and application of computers. It has also been used as the basis for many educational courses, including one offered by the National Extension College.

In Australia the machine has been adopted by a number of State Education Departments. It has become the 'de facto' standard in educational computing. It all adds up to a massive vote of confidence in a microcomputer designed to grow with the needs of the user and the advances in technology occurring month-by-month.

The BBC Microcomputer is a fast, powerful system generating high resolution colour graphics and which can synthesise polyphonic music and speech. The keyboard has a conventional layout and electric typewriter 'feel'. There are two versions: Model A offers 16K of Random Access Memory (RAM) and model B has 32K of RAM plus a number of interfaces fitted as standard.

Room for expansion

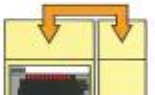


'The most attractive and exciting feature of the BBC Microcomputer is its enormous potential for expansion.' *Which Micro?* May/June 1982.

The diagram opposite shows the numerous options for expansion. Development will undoubtedly bring more. Model B incorporates interface sockets (RS423, Analog inputs, Centronics®-compatible printer and User I/O port) to allow you to connect directly to a cassette recorder, your own television, video monitors, disc drives, printers (dot matrix and daisy wheel) and paddles for games or laboratory use. A special interface socket can also be fitted to take plug-in Read Only Memory (ROM) cartridges containing games or specialist application programs. Model A can be upgraded to include these facilities.

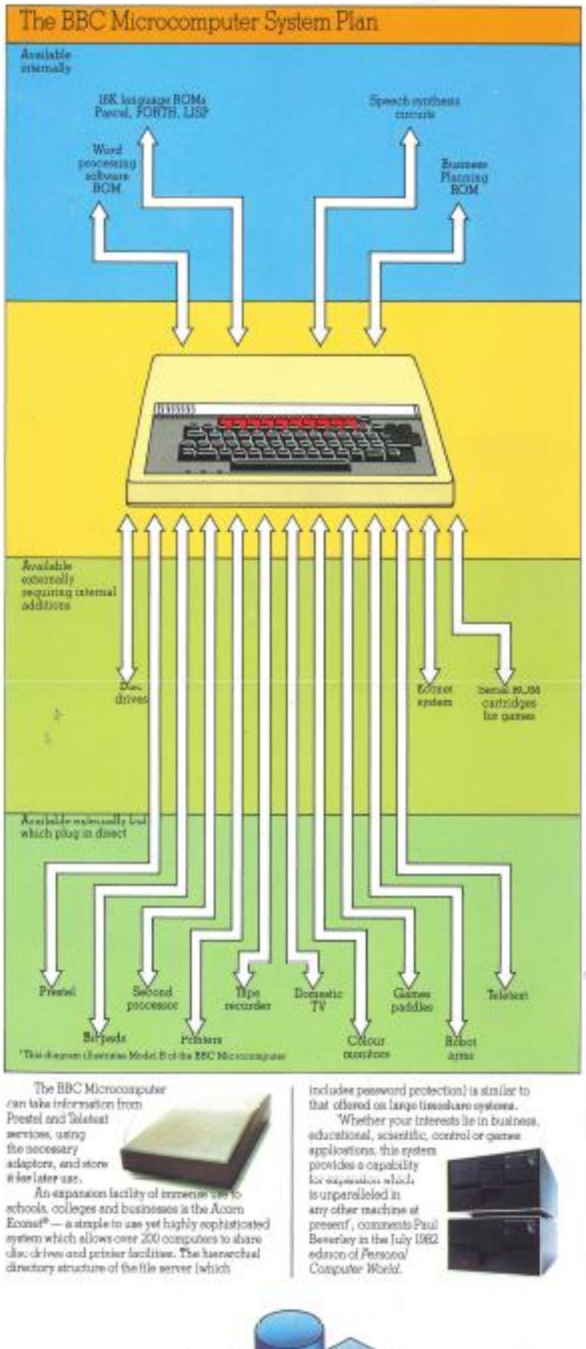


A feature of the BBC Microcomputer which has attracted widespread interest is the Tube, a design registered by Acorn Computers. The Tube is unique to the BBC Microcomputer and greatly enhances the expandability of the system by providing for the addition of a second processor via a high speed data channel.



The addition of a second 3MHz 6502 processor with 64K of RAM doubles processing speed. A Z80 second processor with 64K of RAM opens the door to a fully CP/M compatible operating system, with all the benefits for business applications. A 16-bit processor with 128K of RAM is now being developed which will give the machine a processing power similar to minicomputers.

The BBC Microcomputer System Plan



*This diagram illustrates Model B of the BBC Microcomputer

The BBC Microcomputer can take information from Prestel and Teletext services, using the necessary adaptors, and store it for later use.



An expansion facility of immense use to schools, colleges and businesses is the Acorn Econet® — a simple to use yet highly sophisticated system which allows over 200 computers to share disc drives and printer facilities. The hierarchical directory structure of the file server (which includes password protection) is similar to that offered on large timeshare systems.

'Whether your interests lie in business, educational, scientific, control or games applications, this system provides a capability for expansion which is unparalleled in any other machine at present', comments Paul Beverley in the July 1982 edition of *Personal Computer World*.



Software



The Machine Operating System (MOS), occupying 16Kbytes, has facilities for handling communication between the user software and the Input/Output devices. For example, keyboard and Visual Display Unit (VDU), which can be your own television. In addition, the BBC Microcomputer has many more advanced features such as network (linking several computers together), teletext, speech, and disc and cassette filing systems with compatibility provided by the MOS kernel.

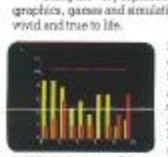
The ROM paging system makes it possible to change instantly between high-level languages. A sophisticated version of BASIC has been chosen for the BBC Microcomputer. This incorporates features normally found only in other high-level languages, but you can have up to four different 16Kbyte interpreters inside the machine, allowing access through a simple command to another language — for example Pascal, FORTH and LISP.

Applications software for the BBC Microcomputer is being developed alongside the hardware to stringent specifications, with wide support from several independent software houses.



A number of packages covering games, educational and business applications are available on cassette or disc.

Using the very sophisticated sound and graphics, games and simulations become more vivid and true to life.



Software development is taking place through Acornsoft, the BBC, major publishers, Australian and British independent software houses and the Microelectronic Education Programme in the UK. Some Australian State Education Departments have developed extensive educational software suitable for both primary and secondary levels.

In addition to software, several publishers have produced books and magazines directly related to the BBC Microcomputer. These include Pitmans, Prentice Hall, Jacaranda-Wiley and Addison Wesley.

Technical support and after-sales service



Your BBC Microcomputer comes complete with the backing of Barson Computers and an extensive dealer and service network. Each approved dealer is able to offer advice and carry out expansion work and service.

Maintenance contracts are available following expiry of the six month warranty period.

For technical specification and further details, contact

BARSON computers

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or the BBC Microcomputer Distributor in your state:

QLD: UPS Business Systems, (07) 393 0000

SA: Northgate Computing, (08) 212 6249

WA: W. J. Moncrieff, (09) 325 5722

TAS: Interact, (002) 34 9018

ACT: Jacaranda Educational Supplies, (062) 81 8020

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The BBC Microcomputer is manufactured by Acorn Computers Limited and distributed in Australia and New Zealand by Barson Computers Pty. Limited.